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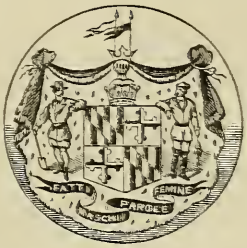
1914 Gen. Assembly
House and Senate documents

MESSAGE

OF

PHILLIPS LEE GOLDSBOROUGH

GOVERNOR OF MARYLAND



TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND

AT ITS REGULAR SESSION, JANUARY, 1914

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State of Maryland,

Executive Department.

Annapolis, Md., January 7, 1914.

To the Senate and House of Delegates of Maryland:

Obeying the mandate of the Constitution that the Governor "shall from time to time inform the Legislature of the condition of the State, and recommend to their consideration such measures as he may judge necessary and expedient," I take this opportunity to address you upon such subjects as occur to me to be worthy of your early and special consideration, at your now pending session.

We are now confronted by a condition where those of us who are charged with the responsibility of government must learn to differentiate between the things that belong to the "Parties" and those that belong to the "People."

The way in which we can accomplish the best results is to approach every proposition without regard to the source of its origin, and only consider the merits and demerits of the matter without consideration of its Party bearing.

If we can maintain among us that proper confidence in our patriotism and unselfish devotion to the State's interest, which is not only becoming, but let us hope deserved, there will be less delay and difficulty in solving the intricate and delicate problems which surround us and become more involved as the complexity of civilization increases.

Economy does not consist of small expenditures, but in the value of the purchase as compared to the outlay. Yet it will be impossible for the State to carry forward its plans for the development of its system of State Highways, increasing the efficiency of the public schools, accomplishing the many reforms in our penal administration and care of the indigent insane and feeble-minded and other charitable institutions, unless we husband our resources, both by making the most of what we have and giving our undivided attention to the development of dormant sources of wealth. It is not enough to know that we possess these resources, but necessary that we fully employ them. It does seem that we have been blessed with unusual advantages, and it is for us to demonstrate that, in so far at least as the government is concerned, they are developed. It may be that our only power is to give the opportunity, but

we can trust the intelligent exercise thereof by our citizens, so that they will properly use the chance not only in their own behalf, but in the State's interest.

The growth of a State depends upon the employed intelligence of its citizens and the charitableness of its people. We should encourage the impulse to create and the desire to allow others to participate to the fullest in the fruits of accomplishment. Indeed, these two principles might be termed the "soul of the State," and their nursery is to be found in the schools and in religious teaching. The State is the product of these, and it is of the utmost importance that in recognition of this that all shall be done to bring our School System to that state of perfection where the future citizen is equipped, as far as his personal limitations permit, to think accurately and act truly in all matters that affect his relations to the progress of the State and his association with his fellow citizens. This aspiration is not a question of Party—it is a matter of patriotism. Under our system of government, it is my duty to suggest the problems and for the members of the General Assembly to find their solution.

Finances.

The financial condition of the State, as set forth in the report of the State Comptroller, indicates that we are continuing to increase in wealth and are fully able to take care of all obligations that we have, up to this time, assumed. From a careful observation, it will be seen, that the present margin of safety should always be maintained by increasing the receipts into the Treasury, either by creating new methods of raising funds or by increasing the burdens already borne by some occupations or pleasures, if we are to continue to increase the demands upon our income.

Under our Constitution, whenever money is borrowed it is necessary to levy a direct tax to take care of the interest, as well as provide a fund to retire the loan upon maturity. It is, therefore, the part of wisdom to incur debts for such purposes only as are of both an immediate and lasting benefit.

A proposition to divert income from the State to local purposes under the claim of "Home Rule" should be viewed with alarm. Such a doctrine could easily be carried to the point of divesting the State of all sources of income except through direct taxation. Things that owe their existence to the sovereignty of the State should, in all cases, be subject to the State's supreme authority. Yet things of essentially local character may be properly left to the determination of the particular lo-

cality affected. "Home Rule" should not mean division of the State into large or small parts, but that political parts of the State should be left to solve only such questions as are peculiar to itself, and in which the rest of the State has not a common interest and no concern. Any tendency to assume that the general interests of one community are different from the welfare of all is unpatriotic and unwise, and the thought that an artificial line can either enlarge or curtail the privileges or burdens of citizenship of the State should be discouraged. The line of demarcation is distinct and can be easily observed when we approach the subject with a mind freed from bias and self-interest—meaning the desire to possess something at the expense of those equally entitled.

The reports of the financial officers show that the revenues of the State from sources other than direct taxation amount to the sum of $4,152,104.24. This is the only amount available for all the expenses of the State Government, including the amount returned to Baltimore City as its share of the liquor license receipts, which amounted to $996,450.82, thus leaving the net sum of $3,155,653.42, to devote to all the State institutions, for the care of the insane, reformatories, hospitals, educational institutions, the support of the oyster navy, the payment of salaries of all public officers, the expenses of the Legislature, the $300,000 appropriated for State aided roads and $138,845.91 paid for the upkeep of State roads. This sum also includes the amounts received from the counties and City of Baltimore for the care of the insane, amounting to $212,033.35.

The consideration of these figures makes necessary a most careful examination on your part of the merits of any additional appropriations which you may see proper to grant, and call your attention to the pronounced limitations of the State Treasury.

The present State tax rate is thirty-one cents upon each $100, and yielded a revenue of $3,132,515.55, being collected from real and personal property, stocks of corporations and tax on Baltimore City stock. This sum is specifically devoted as follows:

To Schools	$1,748,195.81
Road Maintenance	80,478.52
Interest on Public Debt and Sinking Fund to Retire the Same	1,303,841.22
Total	$3,132,515.55

It is, therefore, seen that none of this amount is available for any other purpose than the ones to which the tax is particularly dedicated.

For a full and detailed statement of all the operations of the Treasury Department, I respectfully refer you to the annual report of the Comptroller of the Treasury, which will be promptly submitted to your honorable body.

It is my duty and pleasure to state that in obedience to the Constitution of the State, I have examined twice, during the year 1913, under oath, the Comptroller of the Treasury and the Treasurer of Maryland, touching the condition of the Treasury, and in addition thereto a full and complete audit of their accounts has been made by a Certified Public Accountant, whose report is on file in this office.

It is a great pleasure to bear testimony to the efficient and thorough manner in which the work of these officers has been performed, and the report of the Certified Public Accountant shows that the State securities were all examined and found intact.

Taxation.

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of our adjusting the burdens of taxation as to insure the general welfare of the people. Equality is a misleading term. Those who are creating should be encouraged, and those who are contributing nothing, but are reaping the benefits of values created by the enterprise and industry of others, should be made to contribute in another form their proportion to the State's necessities. No kind of property should bear more than its share, but the obligations of different characters of property should be equitably adjusted. With a full realization of the fact that many hardships exist, as well as a knowledge that many persons are escaping their full obligations, under our present laws, which are the growth of many years, the Legislature of 1912, empowered me to appoint a Commission to study the subject in detail and report their findings. This has been done, and you will have their report before you. You will, no doubt, find it of great value when you take these matters up for consideration. They arrive at the conclusion that a State Tax Commission, having the powers of a Board of Equalization and Control of Assessments, should be provided.

The duty of assessment is essentially a State function. So performed, it should be made the basis of all taxation, which, in all forms, whether levied direct or by delegated authority, is the exercise of the sovereignty of the State. This power to

tax given to the several local political sub-divisions for local purposes should be exercised in all cases upon a basis of value established by the State for all State purposes. The necessity of preserving this equality of assessment is too apparent to need discussion. The method recommended by this Commission and its reasons appeal to me as having great force, and it is unnecessary for me to repeat them here. I trust they will be given careful consideration by you.

All the subjects of taxation, whether dealt with directly or indirectly, by way of license or otherwise should contribute directly to the State, if not all the charge imposed, then their correct proportion. All laws should be so amended as to make the same character of property pay the same proportion to the State in every county and city thereof. It is unfair to exact one proportion in one County and another in another County or City. It may be right to determine the value of property or rights in various localities as influenced by special conditions, which will, of course, differ, but the interests of the State should be relatively the same.

It may not be amiss in this connection to call your attention to the importance of having all fees for Public Service collected in the name of and payable to the State, and all public officers placed upon a salaried basis. In doing this, it is my judgment, many economies could be affected and a more efficient service procured.

One of the simplest reforms, yet far-reaching in effect, could be accomplished by having all taxes for all purposes throughout the State levied at the same time. The custom of levying in one County at one time of the year, and in another at another time, causes confusion, as is instanced in one County where the State taxes are collected in May. Notwithstanding this, they are held by the local collector until September 15 of the same year, and still the discount is retained. This action is permitted by statute, yet in fairness to the State the moneys collected on its behalf should be promptly turned into the Treasury. Such practices should not be countenanced nor made possible.

State Auditor.

The purpose of establishing this office was not only to see that the State's moneys were not being improperly used, but for the purpose of ascertaining the operations of the various fee officers and disbursing agencies of the State. This information is valuable for use in the preparation of any legislation

which might be undertaken, looking towards remedial measures affecting such officers and agencies.

The accomplishments of this office have been disappointing, solely because of the lack of general authority, as well as proper assistance, to investigate the accounts of every Collector of Taxes in the State.

If we are to get the benefits which should grow out of this office, it is important that the State Auditor have the power to establish a uniform system of accounting by all persons charged with the duty of handling public funds, either as collectors or disbursers, or both. He should also be given sufficient assistance, clerical and otherwise, to enable him to do this and maintain thereafter a careful inspection and oversight of these accounts, and compile such statistics as he may deem useful to the Legislature or the administrative officers of the State.

Education.

One of the most important subjects with which the State is concerned, and with which you will be called upon to deal, is the advancement of primary education. I mean that duty of the State to so equip its future citizens with power to read and write the English language with some literary discrimination, and with the ability to comprehend the meaning and purposes of advanced mathematical problems, and acquire as well as possible a general knowledge of physical science and an understanding of the meaning of the history of our country, together with a knowledge of the important events that serve as milestones along the path of civilization. These, it seems to me, constitute the meaning of primary education so far as the State is vitally interested. When this has been done, it is then for the individual to pursue his or her studies along lines best suited to his or her special inclination or necessities, and it is with this in view we are trying to perfect our system of public schools.

For specific recommendations, I call your attention to the suggestions made by the State Board of Education and Dr. M. Bates Stephens, the State Superintendent of Education, which are submitted as follows:

"There should be a State school tax rate of sixteen cents for elementary schools, and the same to be supplemented by local appropriation in order to employ trained teachers and pay them adequate salaries."

"The rural school has vexing problems and needs the best type of elementary teacher in order to make the work of the

school effective. These schools should have direct supervision from the State School Department, and to that end there should be provided a State Rural School Supervisor."

"The County School Board should be authorized, (1) to establish in one approved high school a teachers' training course as an elective, and (2) to send a percentage of its teachers to a summer school in lieu of holding an institute."

"A special appropriation of $5,000 should be made to liquidate the indebtedness on the Colored Normal and Industrial School, and an increase of $2,500 in the annual appropriation for maintenance. The appropriation for the Frostburg Normal School is also inadequate; and that for the Maryland State Normal will need to be increased substantially when the new property is occupied."

"An extension of the compulsory school attendance law, making its features State-wide and its application mandatory."

"A minimum school term of seven months for colored schools."

"Transfer of offices of State Library Commission to the office of the State Librarian in Annapolis, and thus have same clerical force for both libraries."

"An educational survey of the counties of Maryland."

"Permanent meeting place at Ocean City, where a summer course in teaching may be given by proper and competent instructors, at a nominal cost to those taking the course."

To all of these specific recommendations I give my hearty approval, and feel that upon consideration of the same by yourselves you will do all in your power to give them effect.

I wish to bring to your attention the growing desire to make the schoolhouses places where the communities may gather and discuss matters touching the social welfare and the mental and moral progress of both local and general society, as well as using them for entertainments of interesting and instructive character. To my mind this should in every way be encouraged, if for no other reason than that frequent meetings and discussions inspire confidence in one another; an association with the outside world proves a potent factor in the building of a broader sympathy with and understanding of our institutions.

Agricultural Development and Agricultural College.

The diversified soil of Maryland makes her rank high in the value of crop production. Among those States classed as Southern, her rank is first for wheat, in quality and quantity, and second for corn. Our nearness to the many large cities of the East—Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Wash-

ington—makes for extensive garden trucking and thereby utilizing at good profit the lighter soils of the Eastern Shore and Southern Maryland. The opportunities for greater development of our agricultural resources should be discovered and utilized. The way leads to the door of the Maryland Agricultural College. Situated, as it is, near the Department of Agriculture of the National Government, it lends itself to giving and receiving inspiration and help. The functions of the College should be to equip our young men to use most advantageously the soils and conditions of our State to increase production and turn the opportunities to the best possible advantages. The academic courses should, in a large measure, be discontinued, and its resources devoted entirely to the promulgation of agricultural knowledge and skill. The purpose of the College should be to make farmers. The education of farmers' sons, desiring to follow other avocations, is taken care of by our other institutions of learning. The benefits of the Agricultural College could, with great advantage, be extended by making a feature of Night and Correspondence Schools to those in the cities and in the counties who are unable by reason of lack of time or financial ability to attend the courses given at the College. All of this should be under the direct and sole supervision of the State.

The State will, no doubt, be called upon to contribute largely to the rebuilding of the College, the main building of which was destroyed by fire a little more than a year ago. This presents an opportunity to eliminate the private "stockholder" feature of the College. It is inconsistent that a function so clearly necessary to be by the State performed should be committed jointly to a body of private individuals acting on their own behalf, and fellow stockholders and the State on its own behalf. The result can only be discord and inefficiency. The interests are not always the same and in case of conflict among the directors the interests of the College must suffer. We have now presented to us the opportunity of making the Maryland Agricultural College one of the most efficient and influential schools of its kind anywhere. It will be most unfortunate should we fail to use this splendid opportunity.

Closely connected with the work of the College is that of the Experiment Station. All men must recognize the fact that agriculture is the fundamental basis of all industry and of all material prosperity; and, furthermore, that the fertility of the soil is the foundation of all successful agriculture. These facts being recognized, it must be apparent that one of the greatest needs of the State is for exact and authoritative information re-

garding the fertility of our various soils and practical demonstrations as to their economic improvements in profitable and permanent systems of farming.

At the present time, we have vast areas of farm land absolutely unused, and still more extensive areas, which are producing, perhaps, only one-third of the crop yields of which our climatic conditions are capable. If the necessary authentic information were secured, showing the amounts of the different essential elements of fertility still contained in the different kinds or types of soil in this State, and positive demonstrations made as to the effect of restoring those elements, which may be deficient, and of utilizing those which may still be abundant, by means of thoroughly practical and rational systems of permanent improvement, this would furnish exactly the knowledge and proof sorely needed by the present and prospective farmers and landowners of Maryland.

The institution to which a work of this kind should be assigned is the State Experiment Station, at Agricultural College; and I recommend that an appropriation of $25,000 per annum be made to that institution for the specific purpose of soil investigation and demonstration, to be conducted by making detailed soil surveys, to locate every kind of soil on every farm, soil analysis, to ascertain the stock of fertility contained in each type of soil, and by establishing and conducting soil experiment and demonstration fields in the different counties of the State on lands to be furnished permanently for this purpose by the counties or local communities without expense to the State.

Investigation reveals the fact that work of this character is being conducted in many other States and with very satisfactory and gratifying results, appropriations from $10,000 to as much as $100,000 per annum being made for the purpose.

This is a great task and one of the most far-reaching consequence and of incalculable ultimate benefit to all classes of citizens, to consumers as well as producers. On the other hand, it is not an endless task, but one of definite character, limited by the area of the State, and when the surveys shall be completed and the information secured for each of the twenty-three counties of Maryland, there the task shall be essentially finished, although, even then, the demonstration fields should be continued as object lessons and for the purpose of adding to the positive data by the annual results from the application of science to farm practice. For this purpose, it is plainly a wiser policy to use a considerable number of fields, of perhaps ten or twenty acres in size, representing all important soil types, and

well distributed over the State in every county, than to operate a few large farms in a small number of localities.

If wisely used, such an appropriation will prove the best possible investment of the people's money, not only for all classes of people, but for all time.

State Roads.

A complete report will be promptly submitted to you by the State Roads Commission, showing detailed operations, financial exhibits, cost of roads and maintenance, money needed for 1914 and 1915, with recommendations as to the future, and other information and data bearing on the subject.

When this report shall have reached your Body, it will be my pleasure and duty to address you a special message dealing with this highly important work. This matter is of sufficient importance to lend itself to more space than may be permitted in a general message.

Penal Institutions.

There has been a general awakening among the people as to the treatment of our criminal classes and those who have been guilty of some violations of laws for which society exacts punishment. The trouble goes deeper than abuses in our institutions, no matter how reprehensible these may be, and strikes at the root of the whole system of punishments and corrections. While I have endeavored, through the aid of the boards of directors of the various institutions, to bring about a better condition and a more humane understanding of the rights of the inmates and relations of those in authority over them, little of a permanent character can be accomplished without a change in the laws governing the matter. It is of the utmost importance that those who have been guilty of offences against society should be brought to a full sense of their guilt. In this alone does punishment consist. When a prisoner realizes fully what he has done, he is then in a condition for reformation. It should be the aim of the State to preserve the moral health of its citizens and no less to restore those who are afflicted with moral delinquencies to full appreciation of their social obligation. When a prisoner has demonstrated that he is incurable, if there be such, then the only remedy is complete isolation, under conditions that are the best possible for health, both physical and moral. It is necessary and proper that everything should be done to give to all every opportunity possible to retrieve their

lost character and work out their redemption under the most healthful conditions.

It is possible to accomplish this, and I would suggest that there be provision for the separation at all times of those young in years who are undergoing their first punishment, from those who are more hardened and older in crime. The young, particularly when first offenders, are more susceptible to the influence of criminals and the contagion of crime. Provision should be made for open air work for as much of the year as our climate will permit, and such indoor occupation as shall be found necessary should be for State uses. It is not only unfair that our prisoners should be treated as peons, and their time and labor hired in competition with that of free and useful citizens, but the system lends itself to so many abuses, both conscious and unconscious, that in no civilized community should it be longer tolerated.

Having these things in mind, there has been appointed by me a commission of able and conscientious men, who have undertaken a study of our situation, and will prepare for your consideration a scheme whereby great improvement in this class of legislation may be accomplished. The better our institutions perform their obligations, the more economical will they be. The fruits of their labors should first be devoted to the interests of the State, to repay the cost of punishment, and the surplus earnings, for which opportunity should be given, devoted to the support of the families of the prisoners.

To provide an active incentive, the use of the power of parole, vested in the Executive, or some responsible board, has been found to work well wherever tried. To release and confine at indeterminate periods, as a reward or punishment, provides a strong incentive on the part of the prisoner to earn the respect and good will of the authorities.

How many ways in which this labor can be utilized in the interest of the State's development can well be left to the determination of those who will have immediate direction of the matter, but it does seem as though the establishment of lime kiln plants at convenient points, to manufacture and distribute the product to our farmers at or near cost would be an advantageous way to use the labor of some of the prisoners, and at the same time enable the farmers to use a high grade of lime at a minimum cost.

Likewise might such prisoners be employed at the trade of brick-making, the product to be used in the construction of State roads; the plant, of course, to be located where the raw product is found, and a temporary prisoners' camp there established.

People's Court.

The General Assembly of Maryland, at its Session of 1912, passed a law creating the People's Court, by authorizing the assignment of five civil magistrates or justices of the peace for Baltimore City to sit as one court, to hear all cases in which the justices of the peace have jurisdiction, and making all civil writs returnable to this court.

To the gratification of all persons, the Court of Appeals has established the constitutionality of this law, and this court may be considered an accomplished fact. The result has been most gratifying. It has insured to our humblest citizens that careful consideration of their rights and protection for their property which was so hard to obtain under the old system. It has discouraged that scramble for business which was so unbecoming in the dispenser of justice, and which resulted in so many hardships and so much injustice. It is a striking instance of where the abolition of a fee system and the substitution of salaried officers insures a higher class of service at a profit to the State.

Workmen's Compensation Act.

For several years, it has been distinctly felt that Maryland should follow the lead of many of our sister States and place upon her statute books a law that would provide compensation to the workmen injured in the course of their employment, and at the same time not bear unjustly upon the employer. That this was not impossible has been generally believed for some time. At your last session there were numerous bills introduced and considered. One of them passed, but because it did not seem to suit our conditions has proven ineffectual. In order that the matter might be carefully considered as an independent subject, I appointed a commission, composed of gentlemen of high standing and ability, who have given the State a rare order of service. The report of their considerations will be sent you. When the bill which they have prepared shall have been introduced it will be made the subject of a special communication on my part.

Race Tracks.

Anti-gambling legislation in the following States, where pool selling was formerly permitted, has, in recent years, been enacted:

Illinois, Missouri, New Jersey, Minnesota, New York, Virginia, Florida, Tennessee, Louisiana, South Carolina, California, Indiana, Nevada and the District of Columbia.

The only States that now permit race track gambling are Maryland, Kentucky, Utah and Montana.

Maryland has driven the gamblers out of certain counties and let them into others.

Kentucky two years ago passed a State-wide Racing Commission Law, so that all race track betting is now under the Pari-Mutuel system.

I suggest and recommend the passage of a law State-wide prohibiting the making of books and gambling upon races in any form whatsoever.

Publicity Department.

Recommendation is submitted that there be created a Department of Publicity in the office of the Secretary of State and that the annual sum of ten thousand dollars be appropriated for the work and maintenance of such department.

The object to be helped by a department of this character is, the development of the natural resources of the State, by the collection, preparation, publication and distribution of information and statistics respecting its natural, agricultural and industrial conditions; the putting into the hands of people in and out of the State attractive booklets, sign cards and other literature dealing with these and other kindred subjects, namely: "Maryland, the State of Mountain, Plain and Sea;" "Maryland Farms, Its Truck, Fruit and Grain Lands;" "Baltimore City and Its Sites for Manufacturing Plants;" "Maryland State Roads and Scenery."

Let us tell what we have; bring people into the State and show them the proof of it. A "bigger and greater" Maryland is the goal toward which we should travel.

It has not been my effort in this message to attempt to cover every question that may come before your honorable body, nor even to argue the matters that I have included herein. Rather has it been intended only to emphasize such matters as occur to me as being of such general importance as to insure your early consideration.

It will be my duty to address you specifically, at a later date, such recommendations as may be suggested by the reports of the several administrative branches or departments of State when and as such reports shall be received.

Respectfully submitted,

Phillips Lee Goldsborough,

Governor of Maryland.

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